

City of Socorro

111 School of Mines Road

Socorro, New Mexico 87801

Phone (575) 835-0240 www.socorronm.gov



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“New” Landfill Soon Open for Business

In January of 2009 this newsletter reported that “the new landfill is expected to be in operation by late 2009 or 2010.” And now, nearly 2 years after that projected opening date, the new landfill is within a month of opening. Those who empty their weekly garbage into a blue barrel and wheel it out to the curb to be emptied by the big city trucks won’t notice any difference in service. The trash will still be picked up and hauled away as it was in the past. What WILL be different is where it goes once the garbage reaches the landfill.

The two new “cells” of Socorro’s state-of-the-art landfill are located just south of the current mountain of garbage. They are lined with a thick, impermeable liner that will stop any liquids from leaching into the ground water. A leachate pipe will run down the center of the cell to collect runoff and transport it to an evaporation pond. City garbage trucks and individuals who take garbage directly to the landfill will drive up a small rise (much smaller than the current one!) to dump their loads until the cell reaches capacity. Landfill Superintendent Mike Lucero expects that to take 3 to 5 years. Then the next cell will be opened for use. Six more cells are projected to the west of the new cells.

The current mountain will be surrounded at the top with ten feet of riprap ribbon, then forty feet of mulch, then ribbon, then mulch with the pattern repeated all the way to the bottom. It’s part of a 30-year post-closure plan designed to stop erosion and allow native vegetation to take root.

What’s taken so long? The permitting process itself is complicated...and expensive. Operating procedures of the current landfill had to meet certain requirements before the state Environment Department would issue the permit, which happened in April. Now the landfill has 120 days to dig the cells, line them, put in the leachate lines and make sure the wells that monitor groundwater around the perimeter of the site are all in working order before the new cells can be used. The cell liner itself is \$500,000, and the entire process costs close to \$1 million.

But it’s worth it. Without the new landfill, the City and County of Socorro would have to haul all of that garbage (65 tons per day!) to a landfill in another county, paying higher fees to dump the garbage as well as facing higher fuel costs.

The new permit is good for 20 years.



New buildings have sprung up at the landfill: a mechanics shop for maintaining equipment, shelter for the garbage trucks and new offices for landfill, solid waste and recycling departments.

Employee Anniversaries

Pauline Taylor	25 years
Carol Hale	5 years

City Council

Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez	Nick Fleming
Gordy Hicks	Toby Jaramillo
Donald Monette	Michael Olguin, Jr.
Ernest Pargas, Jr.	Peter D. Romero
Ravi Bhasker, Mayor	Pat Salome, Clerk